

UASR_J-10_Matsushita

09:17:19:14

My name is Aiko Matsushita.

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I was born here on November 3, 1924, and I also grew up here.

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37 Masago-cho, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo. Currently, I live in Sendai. After I got married, I came back home, and my maiden name is Matsushita. When I got married, I changed to Watanabe. I moved to Kyusyu, when I got married. Now I'm using my maiden name, Matsushita. I came back with my two kids.

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There used to be the Suidobashi tax office, but it was divided into Hongo and Koishikawa(?). Then, I was transferred to the Koishikawa(?) tax office.

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I used to do a lot of things for fun. I went skiing and skating. Every year I went to Shiga Kogen to ski. There were ice rinks in an Isetan Department Store and also Prince Hotel in Shinagawa. I often went there to skate. My parents let me do that. Especially, if it was related to school stuff. They were cheap, but they were more generous about things related to school events or education.

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Many people from the Hongo regimental headquarters came to our restaurant. My sister and I helped the business.

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I thought we would lose the war for sure, when it had started.

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I heard a lot about the U.S., because my relatives were living there. I thought that we would lose the war. Japan would.

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They came back to Japan.

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They had been in the U.S. for 40 or 50 years. They came back to Japan and lived in Shibuya.

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I don't remember where they lived in the U.S. I don't know. They often sent us chocolates from the U.S. They were doing business there. A restaurant. After they came back to Japan, they started a business in Shibuya. Since they didn't have any kids, they quit it in 20 years.

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My relatives told us that the U.S. was on a higher level than Japan, in terms of resources. The levels of the countries were totally different.

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They wrote us letters. Before the war started, I had seen my uncle once. I don't remember how long ago. He had visited us. Though my aunt hadn't.

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I don't remember about the attack on Pearl Harbor. After the attack, I heard that Japan insisted that the U.S. had started the war. In the end, Japan tried to do a surprise attack, but the U.S. had already known about it. Well, I don't know about it that much.

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I thought that it was wrong for Japan to strike the U.S. first. I don't think that many people knew about it. I heard from my uncle that Japan strike Pearl Harbor first. We received a letter from him after the attack. He said that Japan did first. But the U.S. had already knew about the attack.

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I think that my uncle might have lived in New York.

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We worried about him. I didn't know well about the situation, but my father and my uncle were cousins.

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After the attack on Pearl Harbor, we didn't exchange letters with him. It stopped all of sudden. He used to send us gifts, but it also stopped.

09:26:01:01

Even after the war started, I don't think our life changed that much. We ran a restaurant, and we could get a lot of goods even under a ration system. We even had a plenty of alcohol, maybe 40 bottles, in storage, though we threw all of them after the end of the war, because we couldn't drink them anymore. We had sake, shochu, and

whisky. We couldn't drink whisky, because it tasted terrible. We threw it away. During the wartime, there was "Kokumin Sakaba" (People's Bar), where all bars in Bunkyo-ku area got together and sold all alcohol and foods at one place. On the day before it opened, it posted a notice. My father was in charge of restaurants and bars in the area. So we could get enough foods and drinks.

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When we had plenty of alcohol, we put some of them in a knapsack, and we exchanged it with rice. It was for people at a ration center. We exchanged the left-over alcohol with rice.

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I was not in charge, but my father was. He brought us foods, so I didn't feel we were short of foods and drinks.

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Our storage house was in Mabashi, Chiba Prefecture. It was next to Kashiwa. At that time, we could go to Kashiwa by train without restraint. But we needed a permission from the military to go to Mabashi. So we hitchhiked from Kashiwa to Mabashi. We stopped a military car and got a ride. We never walked there.

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We got on the bed of a military truck, because there were full of people inside. We got on the bed, and we jumped off at Mabashi.

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I appreciated their kindness. They let us do that because we were young girls. If we had been older, they wouldn't have given us a ride.

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I didn't want to go there. But we had to go there every week to get clean clothes. We left home in the morning, and we washed all clothes there, hung wet clothes out to dry, and took them in. The washing for four people.

09:31:11:01

Till incendiary bombs started burning after they were dropped, we were staying in an air-raid shelter. Since we heard noises, when we came out of the shelter, I saw the top of the mountain on the other side flaming up. I was so scared. My mother and sister were so scared that they ran away to the campus of Tokyo University and left my father and me alone. Just two of us. Then, we took all furniture and belongings to the shelter. We were so scared that we almost ditched

everything. But we thought it would be good if we could save all of them.

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It was in March. Everything was burned down in Jinbo-cho and around Chiyoda-ku.

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Before March, we had often had small-scale air raids. Just one enemy plane flew over. It wasn't until March that the U.S. attacked us in great force.

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It was my mother and sister that ran away to Tokyo University. I was so brave, and my father and I stayed there. We got out of the shelter, and we started taking all of our belongings to it. I was so scared. I remember that pretty well. When I came out of the shelter, I saw a pillar of fire on the other side of Tokyo Dome, Korakuen, where is called Tomisaka. If we hadn't had compulsory evacuation, our house would have been burned down. All houses in front of ours were completely destroyed. Around Kasuga. There were so many buildings partially destroyed by fire around the present civic center, when I went to see around. There was a government-owned corporation near there. I heard that it had a lot of tobaccos, and I went to get some with a bucket. On the way, I saw many buildings burned down. I was so scared.

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I went there two days after the air raid. I couldn't go out on the day right after the air raid. I just went to my friend's house to give them some rice balls. I saw some terrible scenes. There were many dying people in water supply for fire fighting use. I saw many of them. Inside air-raid shelters, there were bodies side by side, which looked like mannequins. When I looked into a shelter, there were dead bodies. But they looked fine, since they were not burned. They looked like mannequins. The dead bodies in water supply looked terrible. The ones in the shelter looked fine. Like mannequins.

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I went there the next day of the air raid. I saw some civilian groups cleaning up bodies. They hooked bodies and loaded a truck with them. The bodies looked like mannequins. They were already stiff.

09:35:09:02

I think it was two days later. Or three days later.

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I didn't see that many bodies around my house. There were more bodies up around Asakusa. It was indescribable. There were so many bodies. There were full of bodies everywhere.

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There were still air raids once in a while after the one in March. We had Imperial General Headquarters' announcements, saying that there was the enemy off Kashima, or that some planes were flying over Tokyo, and so on. We didn't have any air raids in great force, but we had several planes flying over. Very often. So I couldn't go to work at a tax office sometimes. Especially, after Tokyo was burned down. A few years later, the head of our office said to us, "I have a very important announcement tomorrow. You don't need to work, but just come to the office." Then, we showed up at the office, and we heard that the war was over. I heard that at the Hongo tax office. The office had split into two, Hongo and Koishikawa(?). They couldn't handle all work anymore. The Suidobashi tax office had split into two offices, Hongo and Koishikawa(?). I was transferred to the Koishikawa office.

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We often had air raids from March to May. But we didn't have any big ones.

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I didn't feel I was in danger. There was nothing left to burn.

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I think the air raid in March was bigger than the one in May. I think so.

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At the air raid in May, there was nothing left to burn in my neighborhood. I think there was more in Asakusa.

09:38:01:03

I saw a B-29 going down. It didn't fell right away. When it was circling over Tokyo Bay, we could see it burning. We thought it would go down, but we actually didn't see that. I think just only one fell in March. Not so many B-29s went down. Even though Japan fired shots, they were blank charges. We thought Japan couldn't even hit them.

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It was at the big air raid. The enemy flew over once during the daytime. A few planes. Then, dozens of planes came to Tokyo at night.

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I saw a B-29 go down. It happened in the day. I think they came scouting. Two planes came, and one of them caught fire around the tail, giving out smoke. I thought that it could be saved, but I didn't actually see it go down. But it almost went down.

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At that night, they came in great force.

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At that night, my mother ran away to Tokyo University. My mother and sister ran away.

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The B-29 went down into Tokyo Bay. It was 20 or 30 kilometers away from my house. I looked toward Tokyo Bay. I saw the plane barely flying and catching fire. I saw that during the daytime, because I could see that with the naked eye. At night, they started dropping many bombs, so we were so scared that we stayed in the shelter.

09:40:46:12

When an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, I was at work. I don't remember when. At the tax office, the head told us to gather and he made an announcement that the war was over. All men cried, but all women were glad to hear that.

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It was after the end of the war that we heard about the atomic bombs. We just heard right after the end of the war that the U.S. made a bomb which could finish the war.

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I heard about it from one of the customers. We had so many military people as our customers, so we heard about it from them. Some of them told us that we would lose. It was just between ourselves. So we thought that we would lose the war. My uncle told us that the U.S. had resources and capitals ten times as many as Japan.

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I thought that the defeat was a matter of course. But it was a bitter disappointment to lose the war. I thought we could never win the war, especially around the latter half of the war. When the Japanese military started withdrawing from everywhere, I thought that we would lose the war.

09:42:57:12

Not at the tax office. I heard it from customers. They came to our restaurant and they told us that we would lose the war. One of them often kept saying that long before the end of the war.

09:43:12:11

I heard the announcement about the end of the war at the tax office. The head got all of us together and read out the Imperial Rescript on the Termination of the War for us. After he read it out, all men broke down. All women were glad to hear that. After he graduated from Meiji University, he got promoted to Second Lieutenant at the end of the war. Right after the Potsdam Declaration, he became Second Lieutenant. Before that, he was Private First Class, or Corporal. Then, he got promoted to Second Lieutenant at the end of the war. My husband.

09:44:18:10

He was at Meiji University. Then, he got called up for military service.

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I don't remember when he got called up. But he graduated from school. When he joined the army, he received a diploma.

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When he joined the army, it was not so tense. But around the time when he graduated from school, you were hit, if you didn't wear puttees. I was also hit in Ginza. I got a nosebleed. I didn't know why. Then, I found out that was because my husband didn't wear puttees. I was fine with my work pants, but my husband didn't wear puttees.

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He left right after his graduation. He went to Kurume. I don't remember well. But he didn't go abroad, because the war was over soon.

09:46:18:02

I didn't tell anyone. He told me not to tell anyone.

09:46:18:02

We talked about it secretly at our restaurant.

09:47:04:14

In my opinion, Japan thought that it could get some advantage over the U.S. if it struck the U.S. first. Probably, the enemy had already known about it. About Japan coming to attack. But I think the U.S. didn't have enough time to prepare for it. At the attack on Pearl

Harbor, the U.S. force got damaged pretty badly. It was Japan that attacked the U.S. first.

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It was no good. I don't think it was a right decision for Japan to strike the U.S. first.

09:48:18:02

I was working as a proofreader at Yamagata printing house. Then, we worked for Imperial General Headquarters. We received documents from them, printed, and delivered them twice a day. Once I opened an envelope on my way to deliver. It was a code. It looked like a shogi board, and a lot of numbers were on it. I didn't even know what those numbers meant. I told my co-workers about it, and I was scolded. The envelope was not sealed completely, so I could open it.

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I was very glad that the war was over. We made a lot of sacrifices for the war. I felt really sorry for people who lost their houses.

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I felt so sad, when I heard the news that some of our customers died two weeks after they had left for a battle. When one of them left, he gave us a mask as a keepsake. One day the mask suddenly fell down on the floor. Then, a week later, we heard that the guy who gave us a mask was killed in the war. I felt so sorry to hear that. We couldn't have adolescence at that time.

09:50:53:23

I lived near the Hongo regimental headquarters. I have some interesting stories about it. Every morning Lieutenant General Uzuka passed by my house on his way to work. Around eight o'clock. My sister watched him passing by from the upstairs. Two months later, we received an invitation to dinner from him. We received a fruit basket, and had a steak for dinner. It was like a dream. I was so surprised. Later, we found out he was the head in the account section of the military in the eastern area. His name was Lieutenant General Uzuka. When we were evacuated, he gave us a letter. It seemed that he might like either my sister or me. It was like a love letter. My father kept it as a family treasure in the safe. It was written in a good hand.